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Report of the Governing Council

Ninth special session (7-9 February 2006)

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Report of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum
on the work of its ninth special session

Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 7-9 February 2006

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Introduction

The ninth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was held at the Dubai International Convention Centre in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from 7 to 9 February 2006. It was convened in pursuance of paragraph 1 (g) of Governing Council decision 20/17 of 5 February 1999, entitled "Views of the Governing Council on the report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; Governing Council decision 23/12 of 7 April 2005, entitled "Provisional agendas, dates and venues of the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum and the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum", paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 53/242 of 28 July 1999, entitled "Report of the Secretary-General on environment and human settlements"; and paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 40/243 of 18 December 1985, entitled "Pattern of conferences"; and in accordance with rules 5 and 6 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

I. Opening of the session

A. Ceremonial opening

1. The ceremonial opening of the ninth special session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum was held on Monday, 6 February 2006, in conjunction with the award ceremony for the third Zayed International Prize for the Environment.

2. The international jury of the prestigious environment related Zayed Prize unanimously decided in 2006 to award the 2005 Prize for Global Leadership to Mr Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General. It also awarded the Prize for Environmental Action Leading to Positive Change in Society to Ms. Angela Cropper of the Cropper Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago and Mr. Emil Salim, State Minister for Environment and Development of Indonesia; and the Prize for Scientific and Technological Achievements in Environment to the team of experts whose work had made the United Nations Millennium Ecosystem Assessment a success. The last mentioned prize was accepted on behalf of the team by the Assessment's director, Mr. Walter Reid.

3. The awards were presented by the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, His Royal Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid al Maktoum, patron of the Zayed International Prize.

4. During the ceremony, statements were made by Mr. Mohammed Ahmad bin Fahad, Chair of the Zayed International Prize for the Environment, Mr. Rachmat Witoelar, President of the UNEP Governing Council, and Mr. Klaus Töpfer, Executive Director of UNEP.

5. In his acceptance speech, the Secretary-General noted that the Government and people of the United Arab Emirates had learned the importance of using scarce resources efficiently, recognizing that sustainable development would not succeed without conservation of the world's natural capital — the environment. That

understanding also lay at the heart of the United Nations' global mission of peace and developn.ent.

6. He highlighted the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which had shown the terrible toll that human activities were inflicting on the resources and networks supporting life on earth, noting that there would be little peace and much greater poverty if that assault continued. He announced that he would use the funds bestowed by the prize as seed money for a foundation which he would establish in Africa to promote agriculture and girls' education.

B. Formal opening

7. The ninth special session was formally opened at 10.45 a.m. on Tuesday, 7 February 2006. The Minister for Health of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Hamad A Al Midfaa, welcomed participants to the session. Mr. Töpfer also made welcoming remarks. Following those welcoming statements, opening addresses were delivered by Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, Executive Director of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), and Mr. Rachmat Witoelar, State Minister for the Environment of Indonesia and President of the Council/Forum. In addition, keynote addresses were delivered to the Council/Forum by Mr. Moritz Leuenberger, President of the Swiss Confederation, and Mr. Yahya Jammeh, President of the Gambia.

8. Mr. Midfaa welcomed participants to the session of the Council/Forum in Dubai, the first to be held in the region. He said that the three main themes of the session — energy and environment, chemicals management and tourism and the environment — were interrelated, and were closely linked to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. All three were integral to the economy of the United Arab Emirates, which had accorded them priority in national planning, policy development and legislation. He expressed appreciation to UNEP for its unremitting efforts to promote sustainable development.

9. Mr. Töpfer expressed appreciation for the accolades and good wishes that he had received on the occasion of his imminent retirement from UNEP. He said that the three previous special sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum had all had major outcomes: the Malmö Declaration in 2000, the Cartagena decision on international environmental governance in 2002, and the Jeju Initiative of 2004. The current meeting had already received a promising signal in the conclusion of the International Conference on Chemicals Management with the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, and he looked forward to the successful implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. He saw the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building as a very promising initiative to promote sustainable development in developing countries.

10. Ms. Tibaijuka spoke of the renewed commitment to the important partnership between UN Habitat and UNEP. Given the growing importance that Governments were according to sustainable development, she highlighted the natural nexus between the two organizations and noted that the environment was inextricably linked to poverty reduction and issues of urbanization. Observing that poverty could also be a source of environmental degradation, she stressed the need to consider the

economic aspects of sustainable development in order to address the huge chasm between rich and poor. She highlighted some of the projects that UN-Habitat was involved in, but noted that the organization was currently struggling to deliver on seven of the Millennium Development Goals and said their attainment would require continued efforts to ensure access to adequate shelter together with the provision of clean water, sanitation and electricity. Finally, paying tribute to Mr. Töpfer for his work over the years, which had benefited both UNEP and UN-Habitat, she once again stressed the need for both organizations to continue their strong cooperation towards the mutual goal of sustainable development.

11. Mr. Witoelar noted that the current session of the Council/Forum represented the first occasion that a United Nations body had met in West Asia and expressed the view that it was particularly fitting that the venue should be the United Arab Emirates, a country which had demonstrated exceptional diligence in its care of and attention to the environment and thus served as a role model for the rest of the world. Reviewing the significant progress achieved toward the goals of international environmental governance since the previous session of the Council/Forum, including through implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan and increased South-South cooperation, he recalled the reaffirmation by the United Nations General Assembly at its high-level plenary meeting in 2005 that sustainable development constituted a key element of the frameworks of the United Nations and urged member States to work together to achieve the targets set out in the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals.

12. In his keynote address, Mr. Jammeh affirmed that the ninth special session was taking place at a defining moment in the history of humankind. The international community had agreed on ambitious poverty reduction and development goals over recent years, which the Governing Council should help to achieve through approval of a new global compact building on the commitments in the Bali Strategic Plan. He paid tribute to the outstanding work of Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, and Mr. Töpfer, who were both due to retire during 2006. On behalf of the States of the African region, he presented Mr. Töpfer with a gift in recognition of his efforts.

13. He recalled that six African countries, including his own, had been selected as pilot countries for the implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan. Each of those States had demonstrated its commitment to implementation of the Strategic Plan by allocating domestic resources to its implementation. The effectiveness of the Strategic Plan would, however, depend heavily upon the provision of adequate financial support, as well as cooperation between Governments, all relevant United Nations and Bretton Woods institutions, civil society and the private sector. Accordingly, consideration of the financing and implementation of the Strategic Plan had to remain at the core of the forthcoming discussions, and it would be necessary to give thought to the establishment of a special trust fund to support its implementation. In conclusion, he presented a statement of commitment by those six States to implement the Strategic Plan, which they had adopted at a meeting of the African Union on 23 January 2006.

14. In his keynote address, Mr. Leuenberger illustrated the importance to the future health, well being and economic prosperity of humankind of safeguarding the diversity of the global environment, and he averred that such measures as finalizing the agreement on a strategic approach to international chemicals management would

be crucial to the success of that undertaking. It was also necessary to recognize that the roles of developed and developing countries differed, and it was important to abide by principles requiring those who consumed natural resources or polluted the environment to pay appropriately for their actions.

15. On the international level, he said that there was a need for clearly articulated policies and goals for the environment. There was also a need for a strong United Nations institution to develop and monitor environmental indicators and to provide guidance and coherence in rule-making. The World Trade Organization had played such a role with respect to trade-related issues, and the highly fragmented system of international environmental governance would benefit from a similar institution. Citing the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Millennium Development Goals as inspiring accomplishments, he urged the Council/Forum to set its sights on defining and achieving global environmental goals. In conclusion, he reiterated his message that humankind had to strive to create a prosperous and sustainable future by protecting biodiversity through a healthy symbiosis of social welfare, economics and environmental protection.

C. Report on the International Conference on Chemicals Management

16. At the opening session, the representative of the secretariat briefly apprised the Council/Forum of the outcomes of the International Conference on Chemicals Management, which had successfully concluded the previous evening. Those outcomes were designed to facilitate attainment of the goal stated in paragraph 23 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation that, by 2020, chemicals were "used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment[.]" The Conference had adopted the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which comprised three documents: the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action. The Strategic Approach documents included sections, among others, on needs and objectives, supporting financial mechanisms, principles and approaches and implementation activities. She expressed the hope that the agreement would be endorsed by the governing bodies of UNEP and of other relevant international organizations.

17. It was envisaged that UNEP would play a leading role along with the World Health Organization in the secretariat according to their areas of expertise and in accordance with their mandates and upon approval of their governing bodies. UNEP was to undertake activities in support of implementation in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, perform secretariat and administrative functions, oversee intersessional work and manage a trust fund for a Quick Start Programme, using funds recently pledged for that purpose. Those activities, among others, were designed to lead to the targeted goals by 2020.

18. As indicated in chapter IV, below, the Council/Forum adopted decision SS.IX/1, set out in annex I to the present report, in which it endorsed the Strategic Approach.

II. Organization of the session

A. Attendance

19. The following States members of the Governing Council were represented at the session:[1] Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Germany, Ghana, Haiti, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Monaco, Morocco, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Sweden, Thailand, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay.

20. The following States not members of the Governing Council but Members of the United Nations or members of a specialized agency or of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were represented by observers: Afghanistan, Albania, Armenia, Bahrain, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Central African Republic, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Serbia and Montenegro, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Venezuela, (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia.

21. The observer for the Holy See to the United Nations also participated.

22. The following United Nations bodies, Secretariat units and convention secretariats were represented: Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Department of Safety and Security, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ozone Secretariat, secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, secretariat of the Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, secretariat of the United Nations Chief Executive Board for Coordination, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Forum on Forests, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Human

[1] The membership of the Governing Council was determined by elections held at the 29th plenary meeting of the fifty sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly, held on 22 October 2001, the 59th plenary meeting of the fifty-eighth session, held on 10 November 2003, and the 43rd plenary meeting of the sixtieth session, held on 3 November 2005.

Settlements Programme, United Nations Institute for Training and Research, United Nations University.

23. The following specialized agencies were represented: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations World Tourism Organization, World Bank, World Health Organization, World Meteorological Organization.

24. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: African Union Commission, Caribbean Community secretariat, Commonwealth secretariat, European Commission, IUCN — The World Conservation Union, League of Arab States, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, Secretariat of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl Habitat, Southeast Asia Cooperative Environment Programme, Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

25. In addition, representatives of non-governmental and private-sector organizations attended as observers. The full list of participants is contained in document UNEP/GCSS.IX/INF/16/Rev.1.

B. Election of officers

26. The President of the Bureau of the Governing Council informed the Council/Forum that the General Assembly had on 3 November 2005 elected 29 member States of the Governing Council for the period 2006-2009 and that Switzerland had not been among those elected. As a result, the office of Vice President of the Bureau which had been held by Mr. Beat Nobs of Switzerland, representing the group of Western European and other States, had become vacant on 1 January 2006.

27. In that regard, he recalled that the Council/Forum had agreed at its twenty-third session that, in the event that Switzerland was not elected to the Governing Council for the period 2006-2009, Mr. Nobs would be replaced by a representative of a State member of the Governing Council from the group of Western European and other States. In accordance with that agreement, the group had put forward Ms. Lena Sommerstad, Minister for Environment of Sweden, to take Mr. Nobs's place.

28. Following the election by acclamation of Ms. Sommerstad as Vice-President of the Bureau, the officers of the Council/Forum at the ninth special session were as follows:

President:	Mr. Rachmat Witoelar (Indonesia)
Vice-Presidents:	Ms. Sulfina Barbu (Romania) Ms. Lena Sommerstad (Sweden) Mr. Sedogo Laurent (Burkina Faso)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Donald Cooper (Bahamas)

C. Adoption of the agenda

29. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum adopted the following agenda for the session, on the basis of the provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.IX/1):

1. Opening of the session.
2. Organization of the session:
   (a) Adoption of the agenda;
   (b) Organization of work.
3. Credentials of representatives.
4. Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment.
5. Policy issues:
   (a) Energy and environment;
   (b) Chemicals management;
   (c) Tourism and the environment.
6. Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.
7. International environmental governance.
8. Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum.
9. Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council.
10. Other matters.
11. Adoption of the report.
12. Closure of the session.

D. Organization of the work of the session

30. At its 1st plenary meeting, the Council/Forum considered the organization of the work of the session in the light of the recommendations contained in the annotated provisional agenda (UNEP/GCSS.IX/1/Add.1) and organization of work as agreed by the Bureau.

31. The Council/Forum agreed that plenary meetings during the current session would take the form of ministerial-level consultations, beginning with the 2nd meeting and continuing through the morning of Thursday, 9 February 2006. In those consultations, the plenary would consider agenda item 5 (Policy issues), through discussions on the policy themes: "Energy and environment", "Chemicals management" and "Tourism and the environment"), and agenda item 7 (International environmental governance), with a particular focus on the issue of universal membership of the Governing Council.

32. The Council/Forum also decided to establish a committee of the whole and, for the sake of continuity in the work of the Committee, elected Mr. Nobs as its chair, on the understanding that that appointment would not constitute a precedent for UNEP or any other United Nations body. The Council/Forum agreed that the Committee of the Whole would consider agenda items 4 (Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment), 6 (Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development), 7 (International environmental governance), 8 (Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum) and 9 (Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council).

33. It was further agreed that the Council/Forum would consider agenda items 3 (Credentials of representatives), 10 (Other matters), 11 (Adoption of the report) and 12 (Closure of the session) at the plenary meeting on the afternoon of Thursday, 9 February 2006.

E. Report of the Committee of the Whole

34. The Committee of the Whole, under the chairmanship of Mr. Nobs, held four meetings from 7 to 9 February to consider the agenda items assigned to it. The Council/Forum took note of the report of the Committee of the Whole at its 6th plenary meeting, on 9 February. The report of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

III. Credentials of representatives

35. In accordance with rule 17, paragraph 2, of the rules of procedure, the Bureau examined the credentials of the representatives attending the ninth special session. Representatives of 57 of the 58 member States attended the session and their credentials were found to be in order. The Bureau so reported to the Council/Forum, which approved the Bureau's report at the 6th plenary meeting, on 9 February 2006.

IV. Adoption of decisions

36. At its 6th plenary meeting, on 9 February 2006, the Council/Forum adopted decision SS.IX/1, entitled Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The text of the decision is contained in annex I to the present report.

V. Assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment (agenda item 4)

37. Agenda item 4, assessment, monitoring and early warning: state of the environment, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

VI. Policy issues (agenda item 5)

38. At its 2nd plenary meeting, on 7 February 2006, the Council/Forum began its consideration of agenda item 5 in the form of ministerial consultations on the two policy issues of energy and environment and tourism and the environment. The ministers and other heads of delegations had been scheduled to hold consultations on the third policy issue of chemicals management, but owing to time constraints, submitted it to the Committee of the Whole for its consideration prior to its further consideration by the Council/Forum in plenary. As noted in chapter IV, above, the Council/Forum adopted a decision on the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, which is contained in annex I to the present report.

39. The ministers and other heads of delegations began discussion of the policy issue of energy and environment at the 2nd plenary meeting, on 7 February, and continued it at the 3rd plenary meeting, on 8 February. They discussed the policy issue of tourism and the environment at the 4th plenary meeting, on 8 February. Mr. Töpfer opened each discussion, introducing keynote speakers who addressed the ministers prior to each discussion in order to stimulate debate, and each discussion was served by two moderators. The ministers had before them reports of the Executive Director on the two policy issues (UNEP/GCSS.IX/9 and Adds.1 and 3); a number of civil society statements to the seventh Global Civil Society Forum (UNEP/GCSS.IXINF/7 and Adds.1-6); and notes by the Executive Director on a summary of the UNEP energy programme and the status of, trends in and prospects for renewable energy (UNEP/GCSS.IXINF/11) and the activities of UNEP in the area of tourism (UNEP/GCSS.IXINF/12).

40. The President of the Council/Forum prepared a summary of the ministers' and heads of delegations' discussion, which he submitted for consideration by the Council/Forum. The ministers and other heads of delegations expressed their overall satisfaction with the summary, and there was widespread agreement on many of the points contained in it. It was agreed, however, that while the summary was an accurate recapitulation of the issues discussed by the ministers and other heads of delegations during the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, there was no consensus on a number of the issues included in it. On that understanding, the ministers and other heads of delegations agreed that the text of the summary, which is entitled the "United Arab Emirates Initiative" and is attached as annex II to the present report, should be transmitted to the Commission on Sustainable Development as the contribution of UNEP to the work of the Commission at its upcoming fourteenth session, at which the Commission would review the question of energy and environment.

41. During the consultations on tourism and environment, the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed the view that current arrangements pertaining to tourism and environment were inadequate and piecemeal. What was needed, she said, was a coherent, strategic, long term approach, along the lines of that advocated in a publication entitled "Nature Based Tourism — a Draft International Covenant". She asked that her intervention be reflected in the present report and that a written submission that her country had circulated be annexed to the President's summary on the issue.

VII. Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (agenda item 6)

42. Agenda item 6, follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development: contribution of the United Nations Environment Programme to the forthcoming session of the Commission on Sustainable Development was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

VIII. International environmental governance (agenda item 7)

43. Agenda item 7, international environmental governance, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

44. Item 7 was also considered in plenary, in the form of ministerial consultations, on 8 and 9 February. The Executive Director introduced the item, and the ministers and heads of delegations were addressed by a keynote speaker, Ms. Nelly Olin, Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development of France, who outlined a proposal for the transformation of UNEP into a United Nations environmental organization that would be based in Nairobi and would have the status of a United Nations specialized agency. The ministers and other heads of delegation were also addressed by Mr. Adnan Amin, Director of the UNEP office at United Nations Headquarters in New York and Executive Director of the Secretary-General's Panel on United Nations system-wide coherence, who spoke on international environmental governance, including recent developments in efforts to increase efficiency in the management of environmental issues in the United Nations system.

45. The ministers and heads of delegations then discussed the issues. A summary of their discussion prepared by the President of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum is set out in annex III to the present report. The summary reflects a variety of views expressed and does not constitute a consensus.

IX. Outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum (agenda item 8)

46. Agenda item 8, outcomes of intergovernmental meetings of relevance to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

X. Implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council (agenda item 9)

47. Agenda item 9, implementation of the programme of work of the United Nations Environment Programme and the relevant decisions of the Governing Council, was considered in the Committee of the Whole. The report of the deliberations of the Committee is contained in annex II to the proceedings of the session (UNEP/GCSS.IX/11).

XI. Other matters (agenda item 10)

48. The Council/Forum took up no other matters at the current session.

XII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 11)

49. The present report were adopted at the 6th plenary meeting of the session, on Thursday, 9 February 2006, on the basis of the draft reports of the plenary meetings and of the Committee of the Whole contained in documents UNEP/GCSS.IX/L.1 and Add.1 and UNEP/GCSS.IX/CW/L.1, respectively, and on the understanding that the secretariat and the Rapporteur would be entrusted with their finalization and that they would consult with the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP regarding that part of the report reflecting the discussions taking place during the sixth plenary meeting.

XIII. Closure of the session (agenda item 12)

50. Prior to closure of the meeting, one representative expressed concern at certain aspects of the manner in which the current session had been conducted, in particular the fact that the Council/Forum had been asked to approve an annex to the report of the meeting containing a summary of the ministerial discussions on international environmental governance which, due to time constraints, the Council/Forum had not had the opportunity to review. To avoid similar situations in the future, the representative suggested that the Bureau and the secretariat should consult with the member States regarding their plans for the conduct of future sessions of the Council/Forum. The representative also requested that her remarks be reflected in the present report.

51. During the customary exchange of courtesies, many representatives paid tribute to Mr. Töpfer for his long and highly effective years of service as the Executive Director of UNEP. Following those tributes and the customary exchange of courtesies, the President declared the ninth special session closed at 6.15 pm on Thursday, 9 February 2006.

Annex I

Decision adopted by the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its ninth special session

SS.IX/1. Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management

The Governing Council,

Recalling its decisions 18/12 of 26 May 1995, 19/13 of 7 February 1997, 20/23 of 4 February 1999, SS.VII/3 of 15 February 2002, 22/4 of 7 February 2003 and 23/9 of 25 February 2005 concerning global policies related to chemicals management and the development of a strategic approach to international chemicals management,

Recalling paragraph 23 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation[1] adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development on 4 September 2002, and paragraph 56 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 2005, in which the development of such a strategic approach was endorsed by heads of State and Government,

Noting the support expressed for the development of a strategic approach at the tenth regular session of the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, on 30 June 2004, the fifteenth meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, on 4 November 2005, the 2,697th meeting of the Council of the European Union, on 2 December 2005, and the seventeenth session of the Council of Arab Ministers responsible for the Environment, on 21 December 2005,

Welcoming the spirit of coordination and cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the other participating organizations of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals,

Also welcoming the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, consisting of the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action, as adopted by the International Conference on Chemicals Management in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 6 February 2006,[2]

1. *Endorses* the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management as contained in the Dubai Declaration on International Chemicals Management, the Overarching Policy Strategy and the Global Plan of Action;

2. *Requests* the Executive Director to convene the future sessions of the International Conference on Chemicals Management provided for in the Overarching Policy Strategy, where appropriate to be held back-to-back with meetings of the governing bodies of relevant intergovernmental organizations;

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[1] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publications, Sales no. E.03.II.A.1) chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[2] Report of the International Conference on Chemicals Management on the work of its first session (SAICM/ICCM.1/7), annexes I, II and III.

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to establish and assume overall administrative responsibility for the Strategic Approach secretariat and authorizes the participation of the secretariat of the United Nations Environment Programme in the Strategic Approach secretariat in accordance with relevant decisions of the Governing Council at its twenty-third session;

4. *Invites* all Governments, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, including from the private sector, to provide voluntary extra-budgetary resources in support of the Strategic Approach secretariat in the fulfilment of its functions;

5. *Authorizes* the Executive Director to establish and manage the Quick Start Programme Trust Fund to support initial implementation of the Strategic Approach;

6. *Urges* Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to make contributions to the voluntary trust fund established by the United Nations Environment Programme to support Strategic Approach implementation activities under the Quick Start Programme;[3]

7. *Invites* Governments, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations to contribute resources to support the Strategic Approach implementation activities of the United Nations Environment Programme and the Quick Start Programme;

8. *Requests* the Executive Director to report to the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session on initial activities and planning in support of Strategic Approach implementation activities by the United Nations Environment Programme, taking into account the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building.[4]

[3] SAICM/ICCM.1/7, annex IV, resolution 1.

[4] UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1 and Corr.1.

Annex II

United Arab Emirates Initiative

Summary report of the President of the discussions by ministers and heads of delegation at the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme

Summary

1. Ministers and heads of delegation of 151 United Nations Member States attending the ninth special session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at Dubai, from 7 to 9 February 2006, met to discuss the themes of energy and environment and tourism and the environment.

2. These discussions were carried out under the leadership of the President of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Mr. Rachmat Witoelar (Indonesia), with the assistance of ministers from Argentina, Ghana, Iceland, Jordan, Pakistan, Spain and the United States of America.

3. Following keynote addresses by His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan, Ms. Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Ms. Deirdre Shurland, Director, Caribbean Alliance for Tourism of Trinidad and Tobago, ministers and heads of delegation addressed the themes of energy and environment as well as tourism and the environment.

4. A rich, wide-ranging and interactive debate took place, which underscored the conviction of all ministers and heads of delegation that heightened attention needed to be given to the environmental aspects of energy and tourism. The present President's summary attempts to draw on the major thrusts of the discussion among ministers and other heads of delegation attending the meeting, rather than provide a consensus view on all points.

5. A future ministerial discussion on globalization and environment was proposed and consideration of timing and modality encouraged.

6. Ministers and heads of delegation requested the President of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to convey the President's summary to the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations and the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

A. Energy and environment

1. On 7 and 8 February 2006, the Council/Forum held discussions on energy. On the afternoon of 7 February, Ms. Christine Churcher, Minister for Environment and Science of Ghana, and Ms. Cristina Narbona Ruiz, Minister for Environment of

Spain, chaired the discussions among ministers, while on Wednesday, 8 February, that function was performed by Ms. Sigridur Anna Thordardottir, Minister for Environment of Iceland, and Mr. Khalid Al-Irani, Minister for Environment of Jordan.

2. The ministerial consultations on energy began with keynote statements by His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan and Ms. Margaret Beckett, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Those statements provided perspectives on energy issues and set the tone for the ensuing dialogue among ministers. Both speakers emphasized the importance of changing existing patterns of energy provision and use for climate and energy security reasons, while stressing the simultaneous need to expand the availability of energy services to developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

3. The keynote statements on energy and environment highlighted the role of good government policies in providing the conditions under which investment decisions favouring cleaner technologies were made. The need for stable long-term policies was underlined as a prerequisite for a real transition towards more sustainable energy systems and as crucial to ensuring private sector investment. The issue of enhanced regional cooperation was highlighted, along with the value of broad international partnerships such as those established after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Both speakers underlined that, in order to address the three overriding concerns of energy security, energy access and climate change, a broad menu of solutions was required that struck a balance between what were sometimes seen as competing objectives; there was no panacea or single solution. Energy efficiency and renewable energies showed impressive progress, but in the coming decades cleaner use of fossil fuels would be a key area for many countries.

4. Many ministers and heads of delegation underlined the critical role that energy played in every society, and agreed with the moderators' observation that the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum had an excellent opportunity to bring a strong credible message on the need for integrated action on energy, environment, and development to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions.

5. Many ministers and heads of delegation agreed that expanding access to cleaner forms of energy was central to achieving the ultimate goals of sustainable development and those of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Many speakers stressed that current patterns of energy production, distribution and use were not sustainable, and that providing modern energy services in a sustainable manner to the nearly two billion persons worldwide that lacked access to those services was the single biggest energy challenge for the twenty-first century. Several speakers stated their concern that the slow progress on improving energy access would make it difficult to achieve the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration in the agreed time frame.

6. Many speakers emphasized that climate change was a serious challenge with the potential to affect every part of the globe and that the energy sector was the largest contributor of greenhouse gas emissions. They further noted that all countries, particularly the developing countries, faced an increased risk from the negative impacts of climate change. Many speakers noted that capacity-building, technology transfer and market mechanisms that engaged the private sector were

critically important in assisting and supporting developing countries in addressing climate change. A number of speakers pointed out that, given their expanding energy needs, developing countries in particular had a good opportunity to expand access to energy services using cleaner technologies and approaches, thus coupling environmental and development objectives.

7. In a similar vein, many ministers and heads of delegation pointed out that many development projects presented the opportunity to improve local environmental quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions without creating negative consequences for development. Several speakers recommended using official development assistance in more creative ways to bring about greater investment and engagement by the private sector in the development of cleaner energy infrastructure, including involving technologies transferred between countries with developing economies.

8. A number of ministers and heads of delegations also said that in almost all countries there existed wide scope for strengthening energy efficiency and conservation policies in the context of wider efforts to achieve sustainable patterns of production and consumption. Almost all speakers stated that improving energy efficiency offered the greatest immediate scope for reducing the anticipated growth in energy demand while also lowering emissions of many types of pollutants, including greenhouse gases. Such efforts were also mentioned by some speakers as improving energy security by reducing energy demand. Numerous speakers recommended that Governments should take steps to promote energy efficiency on both the supply and demand sides, including by adopting energy efficiency codes and standards for key end uses such as buildings, lighting, appliances, agriculture, industry and transportation equipment, as appropriate. The importance of improving energy efficiency in the buildings sector was highlighted, as was the market-making power of Governments as purchasers of energy efficient goods, equipment and services. In this context, the minister of Finland announced that his Government was launching a task force on sustainable building and construction in the framework of the Marrakech process, and invited Governments to participate in its work.

9. Many ministers and heads of delegation recommended the rapid expansion of the use of renewable energy resources, and many examples of successful national policies and programmes were presented by speakers who took the floor. In that context, several delegations noted that significant progress had been achieved since the international community had met and discussed energy issues on the occasion of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

10. In particular, it was recalled that the International Conference on Renewable Energies held in Bonn in 2004 and the subsequent Beijing International Renewable Energy Conference in 2005 had given increased impetus to the use of renewable energy sources. The progress achieved by the major energy initiatives established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, such as the Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development, the Global Village Energy Partnership, the Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition and the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership, was specifically highlighted in that context. Several speakers mentioned the establishment of the Renewable Energy Policy Network for the Twenty-First Century (REN21) as a specific follow-up to the Bonn Renewable Energy Conference that would take forward policy dialogue on renewable energy.

11. Several ministers and heads of delegation recommended that the Commission on Sustainable Development should put in place a monitoring and review process to assess progress achieved on the recommendations embedded in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. They suggested that that process could be combined with the specific monitoring effort envisaged for the commitments made at the Bonn Renewable Energy Conference, and that UNEP could play a role in that regard. It was further suggested that those efforts should build on existing partnerships and reporting mechanisms.

12. Many speakers recommended that Governments should use market-oriented incentives and stimulate demand for more efficient and cleaner technologies, including technologies that tapped renewable sources of energy and made cleaner use of fossil fuels, including transport fuels. National examples and best practices were presented on different policy approaches. The need to share experiences more widely was recognized as a way to accelerate learning and replication, with the observation that in many instances countries with developing economies had successes that they could share with one another and with the industrialized countries.

13. That greater investment was needed in the clean energy sector was made clear by numerous speakers. As the high transaction costs of initial investments in renewable sources of energy and efficiency remained an investment barrier, ministers and heads of delegation recommended that Governments should revise their energy tax and pricing frameworks to ensure that they reflected the full costs of energy production, consumption and use, and phase out environmentally harmful subsidies in favour of other energy sources. Such measures applied equally to developed and developing economies. Some speakers noted the advantages of establishing a funding mechanism that would support activities that increased access to modern forms of energy for the almost two billion people currently unserved. Other speakers noted that this was particularly urgent given the needs of vulnerable and post-conflict areas.

14. In the area of finance, it was emphasized that the private sector played a key role. Speakers further noted that, in order to attract finance, it was critical to have a long-term and stable national policy framework combined with specific short-term actions to show commitment. Such frameworks were especially important for attracting finance from the private sector in areas such as renewable energy and energy efficiency investments, and were key to ensuring real transfer of technologies. Several speakers also noted that the private sector often held the intellectual property rights to new technologies and was thus instrumental to technology transfer efforts.

15. A number of ministers and heads of delegation noted that emerging carbon markets offered a potentially interesting means of introducing greater efficiency to the pricing and allocation of carbon emissions throughout economies. Many delegations did, however, note that successful application of the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was hampered in their countries, often by the small scale of potential projects. In the light of its potential to bring both economic and environmental benefits to developing countries, many speakers emphasized that Governments that had ratified the Kyoto Protocol should increase use of the Clean Development Mechanism.

16. A number of speakers noted that energy use, particularly through poor fuel combustion, had serious consequences for human health, and urged that more attention should be given to the problem of indoor air pollution from biomass combustion in developing countries and that countries should give greater attention to improving the quality of transport fuels.

17. It was noted that, despite decades of progress, the production, transformation and use of energy still had a large impact on the environment and human health. The need to ensure that energy projects were designed and operated to high environmental standards was emphasized. Many speakers recommended that Governments should require the use of environmental impact assessments, risk assessments, environmental management systems and other project-based tools and approaches that were critical to reducing the environmental impacts of energy sector projects in all countries.

18. It was pointed out that the energy sector was inherently technology-based and that new and improved technologies held the promise of reducing the environmental and health impacts of energy use. Many ministers and heads of delegation argued that increased support should be given for research and development of cleaner energy technologies and the more rapid deployment of existing and new technologies in all countries. Joint public-private support for research and development was particularly important, they pointed out, in the case of emerging technologies such as hydrogen.

19. Many speakers drew attention to the capacity development needs in developing countries in particular, noting that those were significant but not always very well defined. A number of speakers pointed out that the Commission on Sustainable Development could be instrumental in facilitating a move from generic discussions on that issue to discussions that identified specific priority areas that would help overcome the major barriers to more sustainable energy systems. Such specific focus would ensure that support could be targeted to those areas with greater effect.

20. Several delegations expressed strong interest in bioenergy, and a number of specific new national initiatives in that area were presented, particularly regarding biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel for transport applications, use of which had the added advantage of creating jobs in rural areas. Other delegations stressed the significant increases in wind and geothermal applications and the growing attraction of photovoltaic technologies. The discussions on renewable energy technologies in general made clear that whether or not a specific technology was suitable in a given location depended in part on the renewable resource potential available, but that most countries had some renewable resource base to tap.

21. Given the expected growth in supply from bioenergy sources and the large number of sectors potentially affected by large scale bioenergy production, some speakers pointed out that Governments should conduct risk assessments of bioenergy schemes with a view to determining potential environmental impacts through their entire fuel cycle. Greater confidence about the environmental integrity of biomass-based energy systems would hasten their development and the acceptance of biomass fuels in particular.

22. In view of both the large hydropower potential in developing countries in particular and the concerns about potential negative environmental and social

impacts associated with many dams, several speakers stressed that Governments should apply due diligence procedures in developing and operating hydropower projects, drawing on the large knowledge base and body of experience that now existed. Several ministers and heads of delegation spoke of the need to increase investment in environmentally sound hydropower schemes, underlining the need to preserve ecosystems in catchment areas to ensure long-term availability of the resource.

23. Numerous ministers and heads of delegation noted that fossil fuels were expected to meet a large share of the anticipated growth in demand for energy in the coming decades, particularly in developing regions, and recommended that Governments should promote the development, transfer and accelerated deployment of cleaner technologies to developing countries. Several speakers noted the need to focus on better-established, commercially proven technologies in the short term, while others stressed that it was equally important to involve developing countries in programmes related to emerging technologies such as hydrogen and carbon capture and storage.

24. Ministers and heads of delegation repeatedly emphasized that the challenge to Governments was one of balancing competing objectives — a challenge illustrated by the failure of the existing energy system to internalize unaccounted-for costs of energy production, consumption and use. That notwithstanding, many noted that trade-offs were not always unavoidable and that corrective action in certain areas had the potential to bring about multiple gains, notably with regard to improvements in energy efficiency that brought environmental, economic and energy-security gains.

25. A number of delegations commended UNEP on the work that it had carried out and called upon the organization to increase its efforts in the energy area, in particular by providing policy guidance to developing countries, stimulating financial sector support of cleaner energy approaches and sharing best practices.

26. Ministers and heads of delegation invited the President of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum to present his summary of the discussions to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth session.

B. Tourism and the environment

27. The ministerial-level consultation at the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum on tourism and environment was chaired by Mr. Atilio Savino, Secretary for Environment of Argentina, and by Ms. Claudia McMurray, Assistant Secretary Designate for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs at the United States Department of State.

28. Ms. Deidre Shurland, Director of the Caribbean Association for Sustainable Tourism (CAST), delivered a keynote speech in which she addressed the tourism stakes in the Caribbean and highlighted the important role that Governments and businesses played in the development of strategies that promoted sustainable development in the tourism sector. Expressing concerns about the weakening of ecosystem resilience and the harmful effects of their wide-scale degradation, she

suggested that tourism could become an ally to environmental and social development by reversing such trends.

29. The ministerial round-table that followed provided a rich and productive exchange of views. Many ministerial statements focused on the main challenges of tourism and environment in their respective countries. The discussions, touching upon policies, strategies, tools, poverty alleviation and multilateral environmental agreements, as well as on the potential role of UNEP in promoting environmentally sound tourism in the framework of sustainable development, were structured around the following issues: Governments' role in promoting sustainable tourism; tourism as a tool for environmental conservation; promoting sustainable consumption and production in the tourism sector; and the required assistance from United Nations agencies to promote sustainable tourism.

30. The secretariat background paper, based on contributions from various private and civil society organizations, was welcomed, as it presented interesting options for Governments to promote sustainable forms of tourism. Those ranged from planning regulations to economic instruments and set out 12 sustainable tourism goals, their resultant policy implications, necessary collaborative structures and strategies needed at the national and local levels. The need to further promote and strengthen cooperation and partnership between UNEP, the World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other concerned international agencies, as well as with civil society and non-governmental organizations, was stressed.

31. Ministers and heads of delegation highlighted the importance of tourism in their economies within the wider context of sustainable development, paying due attention to environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability. Overall, tourism should mainstream sustainability, including mass tourism as well as cultural, sports and ecotourism, by maximizing the social and economic benefits at national and local levels, particularly in developing countries. Ecotourism was also mentioned as a way forward.

32. Ministers and heads of delegation discussed ways to support the integration of sustainable tourism policies. They highlighted ways of supporting the integration of sustainable tourism policies in local and national development plans, giving due consideration to the roles of the various ministries and subregional and local level governmental bodies. The need for the better integration of tourism and environmental policies was raised, and suggestions for achieving that goal included:

(a) Strengthening institutional structures to improve coordination and cooperation among stakeholders;

(b) Exchanging information on best practices, such as the creation of natural parks and community based tourism;

(c) Adopting adequate tools, economic and legislative instruments;

(d) Supporting the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements related to conservation and environmental protection;

(e) Promoting the prevention and control of pollution, as well as the sound management of natural resources.

33. The need to consider and integrate poverty issues in the international tourism agenda to maximize the potential of tourism activities to alleviate poverty was highlighted by many ministers and heads of delegation, particularly in relation to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, concerns were expressed about the potential negative social, cultural and environmental impacts of tourism, and how appropriate management and regulation could contribute to reducing those impacts, while improving the situation of the poor. It was said that tourism should integrate efforts that shared benefits among all stakeholders, particularly indigenous people and local communities.

34. The need to expand research and exchange of knowledge and raise awareness was also cited, in particular with regard to environmental damages and nature conservation at national, subnational and local levels. Speakers stressed that national strategy papers, including poverty reduction strategy papers and action plans, should include tourism as a high priority sector in the framework of sustainable development.

35. Sustainable consumption and production considerations were cited by many delegations as playing a key role in promoting sustainable tourism in general and ecotourism in particular. The main challenges noted included the following needs:

(a) To increase political support, transparency and integration;

(b) To engage the private sector, encouraging businesses to integrate sustainability in their policies and operations;

(c) To improve water and energy efficiency, promote the use of clean energy and reduce waste;

(d) To promote sustainable building and construction practices, as well as incorporation of natural parks in urban areas;

(e) To expand knowledge and build capacity;

(f) To strengthen the implementation of available tools to stimulate action on the ground and the skills and resources for effective implementation;

(g) To ensure the effective participation of indigenous people and local communities in decision making processes.

36. Many ministers and heads of delegation emphasized the links between climate variability and tourism. Some agreed on the need to stimulate demand for more efficient public transport options at destinations as one step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It was also stressed that the tourism sector and tourists should be encouraged to minimize negative impacts and maximize positive impacts related to biodiversity and local culture preservation through their consumption choices and behaviour.

37. Ministers and heads of delegation concurred that the tourism sector could significantly contribute to environmental protection, conservation and restoration of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources. It was noted that tourism, especially nature tourism, was closely linked to biodiversity and the attractions offered by a rich and varied environment. Governments at all levels should directly involve and support indigenous peoples and local communities in the development of criteria, indicators, early warning systems and guidelines that embraced both the cultural and ecological aspects of biodiversity.

38. Certification, as an important tool in creating a market demand for sustainable tourism products, was highlighted, considering its potential to promote sustainable development. To that end, Governments, operators and other stakeholders in the tourism sector needed to have access to information, training and technology. Countries with experience in developing sustainable tourism certification schemes noted that there was no "one-size-fits-all" solution to address the question of sustainability in tourism development and that certification was not a tool that could be used in isolation.

39. The need to improve awareness and the exchange of knowledge between those responsible for and those affected by tourism and nature conservation at national, subnational and local levels was raised by many ministers. In addition, it was noted that national biodiversity strategies and action plans should include consideration of tourism issues. It was noted that tourism plans should likewise include full consideration of biodiversity issues and that national plans should balance development of tourism with protection of natural and cultural resources.

40. Several ministers and heads of delegation called upon the tourism industry to integrate effectively sustainable practices in tourism businesses in a more responsible manner, in particular in developing, emerging and post-conflict economies. It was also stressed that security and stability were necessary for promoting sustainable tourism. Many speakers insisted on the need adequately to plan tourism development following an integrated approach and giving due consideration to land use management, resource use, infrastructure and transport, building and protection of sensitive areas.

41. Awareness and preparedness for natural disasters were noted as critical issues. Ministers and heads of delegation discussed the need to define and implement measures to improve disaster preparedness in communities, especially those in disaster-prone coastal tourism destinations. Many noted that those measures should be developed in cooperation with local authorities, the tourism industry and neighbouring communities.

42. The importance of the role played by UNEP in promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns and engaging business and industry in the tourism sector was emphasized, in accordance with Governing Council decision 22/6 of 7 February 2003. In that context, the Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development of France announced that her Government was launching a task force on sustainable tourism in the framework of the Marrakech Process. Many ministers and heads of delegation voiced their support for and interest in that task force.

43. Various ministers and heads of delegation also requested a stronger role for UNEP and stressed, in particular, that it should perform the following functions:

(a) To cooperate with all relevant national and international partners to provide support in developing national level sustainable tourism strategies, and to identify ways effectively to engage the relevant organizations, including the United Nations World Tourism Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, other concerned United Nations bodies and multilateral environmental agreement secretariats, and to maximize synergies among programmes and activities;

(b) To promote regional cooperation, networking and exchange of knowledge and experience;

(c) To provide assistance, as appropriate, to establish policies based on sustainable tourism goals and principles;

(d) To strengthen its Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at Local Level programme, adapting it, where appropriate, to support tourism destinations in developing countries, enabling them to be better prepared to deal with natural and man-made disasters.

44. It was highlighted that capacity-building efforts should strive to develop and strengthen the capacities within Governments and all stakeholders to improve the elaboration and facilitate the effective implementation of guidelines, codes of conduct, impact assessment studies and sustainable tourism policies at local, national, regional and international levels. In that regard, it was stressed that the decision-making process aiming to promote sustainable tourism should therefore be enhanced and strengthened through an effective multi-stakeholder participatory approach.

Annex III

President's summary of the discussions on international environmental governance by ministers and heads of delegation at the ninth special session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum

1. On 8 and 9 February 2006, ministers and heads of delegation attending the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum discussed the subject of international environmental governance, including the question of universal membership of the Governing Council, within the overall context of follow up to the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

A. Introductory statements

2. Mr. Adnan Amin, Executive Director, Secretary-General's Panel on United Nations system wide coherence, referred to the Outcome of the 2005 World Summit and in particular the significance of those aspects related to the environment as well as United Nations system wide coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. He reported on the current status of arrangements for the establishment of the Secretary General's high-level panel and the high expectation among United Nations Member States concerning the panel's role in the United Nations reform process. He also announced that the ambassadors of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations had been named co-chairs of the informal working group of the General Assembly established by the President of the General Assembly to undertake the follow up to the World Summit Outcome related to reform of the international environmental structure.

3. Ms. Nelly Olin, Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development of France, was the second keynote speaker. She explained that global environmental challenges had grown to such an extent that there was wide recognition of the interrelationship between environmental concerns and development policies. It was an anomaly, she said, that specialized organizations existed that dealt with trade, labour and health, while the environment was being overseen by an under-funded UN programme. She argued for the eventual creation of a specialized agency, built on existing institutions, with UNEP as the basis. The proposal, she said, would result in the formation of a United Nations environment organization, tasked with addressing the wide range of environmental problems facing the world. She said that the proposed organization would be located in Nairobi and could include in its mandate a more coherent coordination of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as environmental capacity building. She stated that the proposal had the support of approximately 90 countries, including those of the European Union, the Francophonie and the Indian Ocean Commission. She also called for adequate funding for the organization, observing that while UNEP had over recent years been tasked with more responsibilities, it did not receive sufficient financing.

B. Reactions by ministers and heads of delegations

1. Follow-up to the 2005 World Summit

4. In the ensuing discussion, the representatives who spoke addressed ways and means to strengthen UNEP and to increase coherence and efficiency in the United Nations system in addressing environmental issues, bearing in mind the 2005 World Summit Outcome and in the context of the ongoing reform of the United Nations.

5. Some representatives shared the view that, bearing in mind ongoing United Nations reform efforts, it was important to strengthen the role of the environment in the United Nations system, as well as international cooperation more broadly. The view was also expressed that it was urgent to reinforce the prominence of natural capital in poverty reduction strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Another representative stressed that enhanced environmental governance was essential for eradicating poverty, as well as for peace and security.

6. Some representatives were of the view that all the three components of sustainable development should be advanced and that measures for protecting the environment should not be undertaken at the expense of development. Another representative called for new and additional resources for achieving goals for sustainable development.

7. Many representatives stressed that the implementation of all the components of Governing Council decision SS.VII/1 on international environmental governance — often referred to as the Cartagena package — remained a priority. They underscored, among other things, the need for immediate and full implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building, strengthening the scientific base of UNEP, the importance of enhancing coherence and coordination within the United Nations system, enhancing synergies among multilateral environmental agreements and improving the financial footing of UNEP.

8. Some representatives, emphasizing the need for strengthening the international institutional framework in the field of the environment, expressed their support for the transformation of UNEP into a Nairobi-based United Nations environment organization having the status of a specialized agency.

9. Some other representatives addressed the strengthening of specific elements of international environmental governance, such as consolidation of multilateral environmental agreements and strengthened capacity building capabilities for UNEP, especially through the Bali Strategic Plan. Another representative emphasized that UNEP should fulfil its original mandate.

10. One representative, noting the increasing environmental challenges that UNEP faced, suggested that there should be a careful assessment, bearing in mind scrap and building within the United Nations system, of effectiveness and efficiency of the current institutional structure, including possible consolidation of existing multilateral environmental agreements, in the light of which the question of universal membership or the need for a United Nations environment organization should be examined.

11. Some representatives opposed the establishment of a United Nations environment organization, as they believed that utilization of the existing

institutional arrangements would be adequate to address environmental issues and the establishment of a new organization was not necessary. Another representative, noting that UNEP had improved its governance, although further improvement of international environmental governance was needed, stressed that it was premature to establish a United Nations environment organization.

12. One representative pointed out that any discussions on a United Nations environment organization should wait for an analysis to be conducted by the Secretary-General's panel on United Nations system-wide coherence.

2. Universal membership

13. The question of universal membership of the Governing Council of UNEP was considered within the broad context described above. There continued to be different views among member States on the matter, and there was no consensus among them.

14. Some representatives supported the introduction of universal membership, as they believed that it would strengthen the decision-making functions of the Governing Council and UNEP as a whole.

15. Some representatives, without expressing their positions on the matter, indicated that it deserved further consideration and reflection. One expressed the view that it was necessary to identify additional value and benefits to be attained by introducing universal membership.

16. Some representatives, however, opposed the introduction of universal membership, stating that the existing structure was adequate.

17. One representative, not convinced of the need for universal membership, was concerned that it might involve higher administrative costs, and requested further analysis of the costs and benefits that could be expected.

18. The view was expressed that the question of universal membership should be addressed by the Secretary-General's panel on United Nations system-wide coherence as well as at the relevant consultations to be carried out by the General Assembly.

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